

NOVELTIES OF A HOLIDAY WEEK

DRAMA, FARCE
AND DANCINGAnn Murdock in
"Miss Phoenix."

WINTHROP AMES'S production of the ultra-British "Trunella" is assuredly a triumph of matter over mind. The scenic eloquence with which the play of Laurence Houseman and Granville Barker has been realized at the Little Theatre is the most poetic element of the performance. Assuredly there is no suggestion of beauty in the verse of the two authors. Its commonplace form occasionally strikes the ear with a disheartening effect. Mr. Ames has done almost everything to help "Trunella." He might have gone one step further, but it is not certain that the authors would have been satisfied. He might have made "Trunella" a pantomime; then the joy of audiences at the Little Theatre could have been unconfined and there would have been no limit to the gratitude of the spectators at the pretty sights offered in the three brief acts.

It is impossible to estimate the damage done to the art of acting by such a performance as John Mason gave in "Indian Summer" at the Criterion of Monday night. It may be different now. The writer has not witnessed the play again and never expects to. The present generation of players often hears of the achievements of actors in an earlier period of the stage's history in this country. Among the reputedly fine actors of the last thirty years was Mr. Mason. Younger players hear of this fame, go to the Criterion Theatre and for two hours or more sit under the most monotonous, drawn out, exaggeratedly deliberate utterance that can be conceived. The dry nasal quality of the voice, the sing-song preachiness of it all, makes the ordeal of a long sermon seem slight in comparison. No sermon ever lasted as long as "Indian Summer."

Yet the younger players will still be told that Mr. Mason is a fine actor and be properly amazed at such an expert opinion. Of course they are instantly prejudiced against good acting if that is really the sort of a thing they have been compelled to sit through. They may still retain their abstract admiration for good acting, but the next time there is a chance of seeing it illustrated by Mr. Mason there will be some eagerness on their part to find out where George Cohan or Al Jolson is to be seen. And nobody who was present at the first production of "Indian Summer" in this city could reasonably blame them.

Fairer it would be to say that Mr. Mason had been an excellent actor of a deliberate and dry school, that he was admirably suited to certain characters still and that his mannerisms have so grown on him that at the present day it is more or less of a burden to sit under his artistic ministrations especially when he has to recite about 75 per cent of the lines in the play. Some such accurate report of the present state of his art would be less likely to

damage the cause of acting to the extent that must inevitably come from the constant overpraise of experience. It is not to be denied that experience and finish is what the actors of the present day most stand in need of. But that quality does not after all compensate for the lack of all others. As an example of a well developed artistic method there is Martha Hedman in Mr. Mason's company. She plays very charmingly and with a certainty of touch that never leaves her purposes in doubt for a minute the scenes that fall to her. And they are with one exception more or less in the same key. But she avoids monotony, which is a familiar sign in the theatre.

Ethel Barrymore never looked lovelier than in the various scenes of "Tante," which proved such a successful medium for her return to the New York stage. Miss Barrymore is ever a mystery of the theatre. Perhaps the peculiarities of her art might best be illustrated by hearing the impressions of a foreigner, for instance, who was told that she was one of the foremost actresses of the American theatre. How astonished a Frenchman or a German would be at the contemplation of the slender technical equipment she possesses. Her voice, of course, is a negligible quantity. No emotion ever colors its monotony nor does any depth of feeling make it seem closer to the spirit of the scene than a casual commentator who is observing rather than feeling what is happening. Then in the mere mechanics of her profession such as walking and moving with ease and grace—the rudiments that are picked up after a few months of routine by these without any part of Miss Barrymore's talent—she is still sadly deficient.

Yet she gives a performance of the selfish worldly musician which is irresistible in its strong personal charm;

if possible, too lovable and too adorable to be true to the type of the novelist. Most of Miss Barrymore's eloquence to her audiences is now to be found in her facial expression. Her smile speaks volumes of happiness or ridicule or hypocrisy, according to its intent, and there are depths of joy or sadness or bitterness in her dark and humid eyes which carry their message straight to the heart of the spectator.

Miss Sedgwick's description of the heroine is:

"She was a woman of 48, of an ample though still beautiful figure. Her flowing dress of white brocade made no attempt to compress, to sustain or to attenuate. No one could say that a woman who stood as she did, with the pose of a goddess, the small head majestically poised over such shoulders and such a breast, was getting fat; yet no one could deny that there was redundancy. She was not redundant as other women were; she was apt elegant as other women were; she seemed in nothing like others. Her dress was strange; it had folds and amplitudes and dim disks of silver broderie at breast and knee that made it like the dress of some Venetian lady, drawn at random from an ancestral marriage coffer and put on dreamily with no thought of aptness. Her hair was strange; no other woman's hair was massed and folded as hers—hair dark as night and intertwined and looped with twisted strands of pearl and diamond. Her face was strange—that crowning face, known to all the world. Disparate racial elements mingled in the long Southern oval and Slavic modelling of brow and cheekbones. The lips, serene and passionate, deeply sunken at the corners and shadowed with a pencilling of down, were the lips of Spain. All the mystery of the south was in the grave and tragic eyes; yet the eyes were cold. And touches of wild ancestral suffering, like the sudden clash of spurs in the languors of a polonaise, marked the wide nostrils and the heavy eyelids and the broad, black crooked eyebrows that seemed to stammer a little in the perfect sentence of her face."

Not all of these qualities are sug-

THE NEW PLAYS AND MUSIC THIS WEEK.

A New Star, Ballet, Some Plays and Music for This Week.

MONDAY—Metropolitan Opera House: Anna Pavlova and her Russian dancers in two performances, afternoon and evening, with a different programme.

Wallack's Theatre: Cyril Maude makes his first appearance in this city, acting in "The Second in Command."

Harris Theatre: "Miss Phoenix," farce by Albert Lee.

Forty-fourth Street Music Hall: Polaire appears in "The Assassin," in connection with the rest of the programme barring the ballet of "Carmen," which has been painlessly removed.

Winter Garden: "The Pleasure Seekers," musical extravaganza by Lew Fields.

Gertrude Elliott
in
"The Sacriment
of Judas."

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Anna Pavlova
at the
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of the travelling Pops. Then came Blanche Hall, Miss Taylor's understudy throughout the winter—an understudy who had not once stepped upon the stage. Miss Ryan was a success, and the personal hit of the play was undoubtedly, for, though the Cort Theatre had not once dropped below its capacity, Miss Ryan's business once surpassed the Cort's.

Blanche Hall was first assigned to the one night stands and opened in Paterson, N. J. Peggy O'Neill began her career in the Court Square Theatre of Springfield, Mass., and was also a success. Last month rehearsals began at the Cort Theatre on Maude Hunterford's company. Miss Hunterford being the next Pops outgoings. Miss Ryan began in Pittsburgh and went into Canada, where British subjects have thronged to her playhouses. Miss Hall has been doing small turns in New York State and Miss O'Neill is in New England.

Miss Ryan heads directly west, playing only the large cities. She will return to United States territory next week, then travel toward Washington and will go on a line which will take her through St. Louis, Omaha, Kansas City, Denver and Salt Lake City to San Francisco. Blanche Hall's company will go South, playing slowly down to the Gulf States, which will be reached about midwinter. She will cross the Mississippi at New Orleans, and will then go coastward via Texas and the desert country beyond. At the same time Peggy O'Neill will be started west on the North trail. Hers will be the cities of Minnesota, the Dakotas, Idaho, Wyoming, Oregon and Washington. Miss Hunterford will probably be allotted to the middle West, while the fifth of the road Pops will find much ready looking—as a start at least—through the New England towns and cities.

TO DELIGHT THE EYE.

The Hippodrome will to-morrow night begin the tenth week of the spectacle "America," which possesses in a way greater educational value than any of its predecessors. There are many beautiful and impressive tableaux in the spectacle, and in spite of the fact that all of them are laid on the Western Hemisphere there is no suggestion of monotony.

The wonderful pictures of "The Last Days of Pompeii" to be seen at the Bijou Theatre have attracted large audiences and threaten to keep that playhouse open for a long time to come. These are as fine in their way as the views of "Quo Vadis," which George Kleine presented so long and so prosperously at the Astor Theatre.

Hugh O'Donnell will lecture to-night on Damascus, Constantinople and Athens and show wonderful views of these interesting cities.

JOAN SAWYER ILL.

Joan Sawyer recently met with a slight accident and for the present her physicians have decided that she should not dance. So her place has been taken by Mae Murray, who will dance with Carlos Sebastian for the time being and also give the instruction in the afternoon. Miss Murray, who is a very accomplished dancer, was Miss Mizzi Hayes in "Her Little Highness." In the other cabaret attractions on the top of the New York roof.



Florence Moore in "The Pleasure Seekers."

gested by the pianist of Miss Barrymore, she is, in the first place, a decade of years younger. But the small head, the regal pose—they are there, and as an illustration, New Haven, Conn., was visited four different weeks last season and the largest receipts amounted to over \$12,000. This was taken in on the last week or the fourth visit of this company.

The producers had learned a lesson. They then decided to send out six companies at the beginning of the current season under the organization now play-

ducers, did not hoodwink the public in the smaller cities. The people and the newspapers were quick to realize this, and as an illustration, New Haven, Conn., was visited four different weeks last season and the largest receipts amounted to over \$12,000. This was taken in on the last week or the fourth visit of this company.

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TWO SUCCESSFUL PLAYS.

And They Did Not Have a Punch With a Kick Either.

In spite of the efforts of theatre managers to fill their houses with plays that offend all laws of good taste and even common decency there are dramas that meet the fullest degree of success without resorting to any such means. In fact the two most successful plays of the last season had none of the objectionable quality that has appeared in more than one play this season. "Within the Law" deals of course with the overworked underworld, but it cannot be said to possess any positively objectionable traits either in tendency or in its actual scenes. Yet it is one of the most popular dramas acted in years. Then "Peg of My Heart," which has been on view for a much longer time than any other play except "Within the Law," is altogether free from any objectionable features. It is indeed quite idyllic in its simplicity.

Some statistics concerning these two pieces will make it plain how successful plays may be and yet have no fight to lure the public in. Last season, some time after "Within the Law" showed signs of being a sensational success, the American Play Company wanted to find out if the play had any value for other towns. A company was formed about Christmas, playing to a very good business, but not enough to satisfy the management. They booked the company for return dates in all the cities after the first six weeks. The results were very gratifying, as the company played to capacity on its return in all cities. The American Play Company, pre-

Between the acts of "At Bay," the new Scarborough melodrama for Guy Standing, who came to New York to act with Chrystal Herne, Mr. Standing expressed to a SUN reporter some of his opinions on his profession.

"When Arnold Bennett came to America," said Mr. Standing, "there was nothing that impressed him so much as the architectural grandeur of New York. Those wonderful buildings, however, are but the outward sign of the continued and ever increasing progress of Americans in everything.

"After being away for five years I have returned to be most deeply impressed by the artistic culture of Americans, and naturally, being of the stage, they are things theatrical that I have noticed first. I am a theatrical progressive. All my professional life I have done what I could in my humble way to aid the struggle to place the stage and acting on a high plane of artistry. Acting was never so looked up to as now.

"Actors and actresses have themselves accomplished this by their determination to recognize that the calling of acting is among the greatest of all professions. I sometimes believe Americans have done more along this line than others. For one reason they are

free from some of the traditions that hedge about actors of other nations. What they have done has never so impressed itself on me as it has since my recent return to America.

"In America they take their profession with a dignified view, and while demanding for themselves the recognition accorded any man or woman in any profession they are not in any sense of the word 'high brow,' nor is there among the most of them too exalted an idea of the individual ego.

"I think the wonderful progress that has been made in acting in America is due primarily to one thing, education; the fact that colleges are fostering the idea that the profession of acting is a noble one. College women are among the foremost American actresses. I mention women because of the deplorable fact that so few college men have taken acting seriously. Many of them would like to, I am sure, but something of the stigma that still clings from those 'good old days' of the stage deters them. When American college men look on acting as American college women do then there will be more great American actors.

"Managers who want actors to play the parts of gentlemen import them. In England our actors are recruited from Cambridge and Oxford. Why, then, is it that Yale, Harvard or Princeton cannot give a few really highly educated gentlemen to the stage?

"It is not difficult to play the part of a gentleman. There is only one great essential—to be one. Of course technique, personality, education, are needed, but in a way those things are 'mechanical' of our trade. There are so many true gentlemen in America, does it not seem strange they should so seem to imagine they would be losing some of those very qualifications by displaying them on the stage? Now is the psychological moment for the gentleman in acting. It is time we were getting back to the love story, the play with the hero, a gentleman, whose solitude for the troubles of the heroine, his self-sacrifice, his good humor and triumph over obstacles and the final happy ending which will never lose its appeal to his hearted, sympathetic, emotional for all their denial Americans who prove every day of their lives that all the American world loves a lover.

"To me it is the psychological time for the return of the hero to Broadway. Mr. Scarborough recognized this when he wrote 'At Bay.' And, by the way, that same dramatist is himself a vindication of my theory of college men and the stage. They may not as yet have taken up acting seriously, but they have certainly taken up play writing. Mr. Scarborough is a university man, as are also many of the leading dramatists of to-day."

New Dramas and Musical Plays to Be Heard

Cyril Maude, the distinguished English actor, will be seen to-morrow night for the first time in this country since he acquired renown as a player. Mr. Maude will appear at Wallack's Theatre in "The Second in Command," by Robert Marshall. John Drew acted the comedy here about a decade ago. Mr. Maude's company comes directly from his own theatre, The Playhouse, in London, and among its members are Lennox Pawle, Montagu Love, Edward Combermere, Arthur Curtis, Jack Hobbs, John Harwood, Hunter Nesbitt, James Dale, Mary Merrill, Margaret Swallow, Maude Andrews, Lena Haidley, Emma Chambers, Olivia Glynn and Margery Maude. Miss Maude plays the leading roles in her father's company. She is a daughter of Winifred Emery, and made her first appearance here several years ago.

Mr. Maude will remain at Wallack's for some weeks and during that time will play "Beauty and the Barge," by W. W. Jacobs and L. N. Parker; "The Headmaster," by Edward Knoblauch and Wilfred I. Golby; "Grumpy," by the authors of "Sunday," whoever they may be, and a new version of "The Vicar of Wakefield," by L. N. Parker.

Anna Pavlova, the incomparable dancer of her time, will be seen at the Metropolitan Opera House to-morrow afternoon and evening in a variety of new dances. She will be supported by Novikoff and other dancers and there will be some recent examples of the scenic art of Bakst.

Albert Lee is the author of "Miss Phoenix," which is to be produced to-morrow night at the Harris Theatre. The farce deals with the adventures of a young woman who is mistaken for the wife of a young man who happens to be the husband of another. It is said that the play begins and ends in a Turkish bath. Ann Murdock, Maud Knowlton, Robert Mackay, Conway Tearle, Henry Mortimer, Ben Hendricks, Ivan Simpson, Lenore Phelps, Jane Morrow, T. Tamamoto, W. L. Romaine and Paula Roba are in the cast.

Lew Fields will produce "The Pleasure Seekers" at the Winter Garden to-morrow night. There will be a large cast of well known entertainers who have recently been members of the organization presenting "Hanky Panky." The book of

the new extravaganza is credited to Edgar Smith, with music by E. Ray Goetz. Two Hippodrome artists have been called in in the persons of Arthur Voegtlin and W. J. Wilson. The actors will be Max Rogers, Bobby North, Harry Cooper, Hugh Cameron, George White, Dorothy Jordan and Florence Montgomery.

Forbes-Robertson will play "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" at the Shubert Theatre on Monday evening. Interest will be imparted to the revival from the appearance of Gertrude Elliott as the slavey, which was always the most sympathetic feminine character in the play. This will be followed by "The Sacriment of Judas," by L. N. Parker. On Tuesday and Thursday will be acted "The Light That Failed," on Wednesday, "Hamlet," and Friday "Mice and Men." The double bill will be acted at the other performances.

Mile. Polaire will be added to the programme at the Forty-fourth Street Music Hall to-morrow afternoon, appearing in "The Visitor," which has been one of her most successful specialties during recent seasons. The rest of the programme will remain the same.